Why I Left Islam and Became a Christian - Apostate Prophet Shares His Testimony

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FRANK:
Ladies and gentlemen, how does a Muslim man who spent much of his upbringing in the country of Turkey actually put himself at great risk to leave Islam and then not only leave Islam, but become an atheist, and then after some time being an atheist, become a Christian?

How does this happen? Why was he a Muslim? Why did he leave Islam for atheism? And why did he leave atheism for Christianity? I don't know if we'll get to all that tonight or today, but I'm talking to Ridvan Aydemir who's also known as the Apostate Prophet.

Anyone with the name Apostate Prophet certainly gets a round of applause because there's a lot of people booing him over there in the Islamic world. But here he is, ladies and gentlemen. Ridvan, we have just met a couple of times. I saw you briefly at Charlie's memorial.

You were on a show with Charlie last July, which is a great program we'll put in the show notes. But why don't you give our viewers and listeners kind of an overview of your life and how you got to where you are now?

AP:
Sure. Thank you. Before I start, it's a great pleasure to sit down with you and talk with you, Frank. I have a lot of love for you, and I hope that we work together again, or more in the future.

FRANK:
Absolutely.

AP:
Yeah. I did tell my story a little bit to Charlie. It was very kind of him to simply reach out to me one day out of the blue and to say, hey. I want to know more about you and all that. And I would like you to come and tell me your story.

And he was kind enough to invite me there. And I got to, even for a very short time, meet that wonderful person that he, that he was. So, just want to remember that. But yeah, so I am of Turkish origin. My name is Ridvan Aydemir.

I sarcastically, satirically call myself Apostate Prophet because apostasy is a very, very difficult thing in Islam. When people, you know, leave different religions, they usually do not refer to themselves as ex whatever religion. When people leave Islam, they have a tendency to use the label ex Muslim for themselves because they want to engage in activism because it is a very important thing.

Because leaving Islam is not just something that is frowned upon. You are not just shunned, you are also threatened. I was threatened like that. I grew up as a, as a Turkish Muslim in a Turkish Muslim family. I actually initially grew up in Germany where I was born and lived there for 15 years until I eventually had to move to Turkey with my parents because they wanted to live in a Muslim country.

At least they were consistent, unlike many other immigrants. I can give them that. There I, through my struggles, through my early life, began exploring different ideas and eventually found myself becoming very close to the religious Islamic ideas that my parents always taught me from very early on.

So I began practicing and following Islam very strictly for many years. But during those years, I had a lot of questions about the Quran, which I sat down and read several times. I read it once. It was very confusing.

I read it twice. I had more questions when I read it the third time. It was over. There was just no way back. Because this book that I was taught to believe in, that I was raised with, that my

family was all about, turned out to be a very ignorant book, a religion or a religious scripture that seems to be a product of simple and pure ignorance in 7th century Arabia.

There is a difference between the Bible and the Quran. For example, the Quran is, as we know, a collection of scripture that is, that is just so rich, that is so ahead of its time. I always give the example of Ecclesiastes, which was my favorite book even when I was an atheist. And I've always considered it very, very much ahead of its time.

FRANK:
The Bible you mean? Yeah.

AP:
Yeah, the Bible. So Ecclesiastes was, I specifically thought, was very, very much ahead of Its time. The Quran, in comparison, doesn't have anything like that. You know, the Quran is a book that is not rich, that is not full of wisdom, that does not have history, that doesn't teach you much and that is simply the collection of crazy ramblings by a 7th century merchant turned warlord actually.

So when I realized that this book was full of ignorance, including about the world around us, about creation, about the sky, and the sun, and the stars, and all that, it was very difficult to me to hold on to it.

On top of that, the Quran also teaches so much hate. When I grew up, I was taught to hate by my parents, primarily the Jews, but then also the Christians that we lived around and all other disbelievers. And it wasn't a big surprise.

When I read the Quran for the first time, I realized that that is where everything comes from. The Quran is very hostile. It already starts in a very hostile way about how this is the one true book and all those who reject it are sick in their hearts and all that. So it teaches hate, hate, and hate, and contradicts so much with the Bible in things that it is supposed to be consistent on.

So at some point as I continued questioning, I ended up leaving Islam, which I'm really dumbing down right now. It was actually a very, very long process and very complicated and very very

difficult, a very difficult step to make. But one day I did tell myself, I simply don't believe in it anymore. And I actually said it out loud to myself. I am no longer a Muslim. I no longer believe in Allah. I don't believe in Islam anymore. And that's where I left.

FRANK:
Was there a tipping point? Was there something you discovered that you said, this just can't be true?

AP:
There was one specific story. So I talked about the sun, and stars, and sky and all that. And the Quran of course does have these. Although Muslims often claim that it is a book of signs and not of science, the Quran clearly applies to science, to the natural world around us in order to prove the point that the author is Allah.

It says, "And look at the sky. Does it have any cracks?", in order to prove that it is Allah who made it and who wrote it. But there is one section in the Quran which is a very interesting one. In chapter 18, it tells a story of a man known as the Two Horned One, who walked, to the farthest site in the east and saw the sun rising upon people who didn't have any protection against it, and he built for them a wall.

Then he traveled to the farthest west where he eventually found the sun as it was setting in a murky muddy spring. That's what he observed. When I read this, I was very confused about it. And I asked imams and I asked others to answer this question and the answers that they gave were simply very insufficient.

As I questioned it further, I then found out that this story is actually directly taken because somebody came to Muhammad and asked him about somebody named Dhul Qarnayn, the Two Horned One. And he apparently didn't know. So he went and found something out and came back.

And the story that he tells here is actually a parallel of a myth about Alexander the Great that people told back in the day from these mythical stories about him called 'The Alexander Romance', where he allegedly also went to the east and built a big wall and then went to the

very, very far west and all that, and built a wall against Gog and Magog that will come and attack the world and all that.

So it's a story that he directly took from folk legends about Alexander the Great. And it was very strange to me to find that out because the Two Horned One in the Quran is praised as a servant of Allah who is righteous and who is guided by Allah. Alexander the Great was as pagan as it gets. He declared himself God.

And the whole description of the Quran sinking in a muddy spring, I tried to, as much as I could interpret that you know, metaphorically and all that, which is what Muslims nowadays try to do, but there simply is no metaphor. He goes and he sees the sun setting in a murky spring.

And when we go to the earliest sources, the earliest interpretations and explanations of the Quran, we find that the earliest scholars and interpreters such as Tabari, who is an early interpreter of the Quran, was not arguing that this is a metaphorical explanation, but rather that there is actually such a place where the sun goes at night to set in a muddy spring.

And then the discussion that he has is only about whether it's a muddy spring, a dark spring, a murky spring and all that. So it turned out that the Quran appeals to a very a very ignorant environment, a very very uninformed, unenlightened world where people in the seventh century simply have these fantasies about the world and don't actually know anything about how it was created and what it looks like. And the Quran, which is claimed to be Allah's word, directly affirms those mythical perspectives. So—

FRANK:
We have a lot more with the Apostate Prophet. You want to check his YouTube channel out. Look for Apostate Prophet. In fact, he's got one YouTube video up there, '43 Scientific Mistakes in the Quran.' It's got 800,000 views.

Check that out. That's one of them, the sun setting in a muddy spring. We'll talk a lot more with Apostate Prophet after the break. Don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.

How would you like to be known as the Apostate Prophet from Islam? Sounds like a dangerous life. Well, it is. My guest today is the Apostate Prophet. And his YouTube channel, Apostate Prophet, you can see, has some amazing videos on it that will help you understand the second largest religion in the world.

And he came out of that religion, became an atheist, then became a Christian. We're just talking about that process here on I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, which is on the American Family Radio Network and several other stations around the country. I'm Frank Turek. Apostate?

AP:
Yes.

FRANK:
That's not his first name, but I kind of like that. [Laughter] Hey, Apostate. Hey, Ridvan.

AP:
So people just say AP sometimes.

FRANK:
Yes, AP. We call you AP. So, you decide as you read the Quran, the Quran just cannot be true. How old are you at the time? And how do you break this to your parents? And then what happens?

AP:
It's very difficult for me to remember what year something was and how old I was in that year because I often forget what my birthday actually is and how old I am. But I think it was-- I'm pretty sure that it was around the year 2012.

That's when I was about 21 years old or something like that. 2013 was actually when I made a decision, no, that's true. When I made the decision to leave Islam completely behind, then a year after that, I was still questioning faith and all that. The thing is, I didn't really tell my parents at first.

My parents found it very fascinating, and they were very happy about the fact that I would, before that time, sit down and pray, and try to be a good Muslim, and all that, because that was the most important thing to my parents. They would really like to see me be a good Muslim.

So they found great joy in that. I cared a lot about how my mother felt, cared a lot about her happiness. I have a lot of grievances about being raised in a Muslim family, but I've always had love for my parents and especially my mother and her feelings.

It was very difficult for me to actually break it to them that I left Islam. So what I actually did was to not tell them, but to kind of make it obvious that I'm not really practicing anymore, which made them a little bit upset, but to rather start speaking online about it. [Clears throat] Excuse me.

And that eventually led them to find out from other people who saw me online that I had left Islam and that I'm also now criticizing Islam. In retrospect, it probably wasn't really a good idea to do it this way because it was probably more hurtful. But of course they are very upset about it.

They don't like it. My father has cut all ties with me, and he said to me only in a text message the last time that I saw him or after I saw him, he said, under these circumstances, you cannot be our son anymore.

And you have to change your ways. Otherwise you are basically dead for us. So I have since not talked to my father. I occasionally talk to my mother, but our relationship is very strained since then. But this is nothing because I have met a lot of Muslims along the way, or a lot of ex Muslims along the way who left Islam and who are now under constant threat from their families.

Gladly, my family didn't tend to be or doesn't tend to be a very violent one. There are other ex-Muslims that I know of who are in hiding who had to leave entire countries who were chased with debt, with threats of death by their fathers, and their brothers, and cousins, and relatives who are being persecuted by their governments that they lived under.

So, it is a very difficult thing to be an ex Muslim. Nowadays for me, when I speak out, I do constantly get death threats. Sometimes it's just talk. Sometimes it seems more credible. Gladly, I am in the United States of America, where we have our freedoms guaranteed.

So the FBI checks in on me and also tells me that I shouldn't be intimidated by anybody, that I'm free to do whatever I want to do, and that I should simply stay strong and keep going. People in Europe, for example, don't have the support of their own, you know, governments and security forces.

Gladly we do. But, yeah, so leaving Islam is a is a dangerous path. In multiple countries there is still a death penalty for it. In other countries you can be locked up and fined for it and lose your family and all your belongings for it. And even if the governments don't do anything, people are always there wanting to harm you and to kill you. So it's pretty bad.

FRANK:
This is right from Surah 3 if I'm not mistaken, is it not?

AP:
Well there are many parts in the Quran that do instruct Muslims to be harsh, and to fight, and to be harsh toward those also who turn away from the faith.

It is actually more precisely the Hadith, the traditions, the narrations that go back to Muhammad. Because in Islam, the Quran is not the sole source of rulings, and morality, and information and all that. The Hadith, the narrations about things that Muhammad did and said are on the second place, if not directly equal if they are authenticated.

So Muhammad did say, according to authentic or Islamically authentic reports, whoever changes his religion, kill him. According to other narrations, he said that no Muslim can be killed unless he commits adultery, murder, or he leaves Islam, for example.

So these are not disputed. Because of these rulings, because of these commands by Muhammad, Muslims have for 1,400 years held that it's the right thing to do to persecute and to kill apostates. All the legal schools of Islamic jurisprudence agree on this.

They only agree on how the execution should be done, whether the apostate should be given a chance to return or not. And they all agree that if the apostate has spoken out and waged war verbally or otherwise against Islam, then there is no redemption anymore. That person needs to be executed. So these are very direct Islamic rulings.

FRANK:
But we're told that Islam is the religion of peace. How does this square with this kind of thinking here AP?

AP:
So the funny thing is that a lot of people also add to that that Islam directly means peace. And Islam actually doesn't mean peace. It means submission. It means direct submission to not only Allah the Creator, but also to Muhammad. Because the Quran doesn't simply put Allah as the one that people need to submit to as authority.

It also puts the Muhammad as the secondary authority. Everybody who listens to Allah also needs to listen to Muhammad in order to enter Islam. You have to say, I testify there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. So, you submit fully to Allah and his so-called messenger, and Allah and his so-called messenger order violence and persecution.

You can of course have peace if you fully abide by Islam's brutal laws. And of course if you refuse to do that, you can die and rest in peace. But that's all the peace there is to it, unfortunately.

FRANK:
Yes. And unfortunately people in the west here want to play footsie with this kind of thing, and they don't seem to realize that this kind of violence has been going on for 1400 years from Muhammad right up to today.

So you have to have a lot of courage to do what you're doing. Let me ask you a question that I asked some Muslims when I was in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and a question I ask any non-Christian here. The question is, if Christianity were true, would you become a Christian?

And sometimes with Muslims I say, if Jesus really rose from the dead to prove he was God, would you follow him? And I asked a couple of Muslims that on my recent trip and they both said they would. If you were to ask that question to your parents, what do you think they would say?

AP:
If Jesus rose from the dead, would you follow him? That's the question, right?

FRANK:
Yeah. If Jesus really rose from the dead to prove he was God, would you follow him?

AP:
Would you follow him? I wonder, as well. Now I'm being put on the spot here, but I wonder as well what my parents would say. I'm really curious about that as well. I think if I asked this question to my parents, they would simply refuse to answer and would probably get angry about it. But in all honesty, I really wonder. They normally would think that they should follow him and that they should become Christians.

But something would probably kick in and they would refuse that. But if they came to believe it, they would have to follow Christianity and would have to leave Islam behind because Islam is not compatible with Christianity. Islam is directly in contradiction with Christianity. And the Quran directly says that Jesus did not die, that he was not killed, not crucified, and that Christianity is false, and that Jesus is not God, and that all those who say that Jesus is God will go to hell, and stay there forever.

So the Quran is actually very, very clear on that. But that is a very, very interesting question. I want to go back to, one thing that you said. So in the west people have this false impression that Islam is a religion of peace. Unfortunately, one of the main people who are a factor who created this is George W. Bush after 9/11.

Nine eleven was a terrible event. In the aftermath in order to calm down the masses, and you know, prevent them from attacking Muslims or something like that, he went out and he actually said the phrase Islam-- It's not about Islam.
Islam is a religion of peace. He very much popularized this. And people picked it up and make that ridiculous claim. Throughout the 1,400 years, Muslims never claimed that Islam is a religion of peace. As I grew up, I never heard from Muslims, or from my parents, or from anyone else that it's a religion of peace because it's a ridiculous claim.

It is a false claim, popularized, actually, by some Muslim organizations in the 1960s and later on, but then very much popularized by George W. Bush, unfortunately, and picked up in the Western world. But people really need to let go of this. Islam invaded and attacked the west for 1,400 years relentlessly. It certainly is not a religion of peace.

FRANK:
Yeah, there is a myth in our country about that, and unfortunately, many people now believe it, and they're letting their guard down. But I want to talk about-- And we'll talk about this after the break in more detail, but I want you to introduce it right now, AP, if you could.

And this is the one thing that I find helpful, and I know you, and David Wood, and others find helpful. If you just have a short conversation with a Muslim to plant a seed in that Muslim, is something called the Islamic Dilemma. Can you just start talking about that? We got about a minute before the break, and then we'll pick it up on the other side.

AP:
Yeah. So the Islamic Dilemma is a very, very nice concept and an irrefutable, fantastic argument, actually, which I will butcher if I try to explain it very well. But it goes something like, that the Quran directly affirms that the previous scriptures, the Gospel and the Torah, were revealed by Allah and are still available in the hands of the Jews and the Christians.

So it said this in the seventh century, but the Torah and the Gospel, if read, are in direct contradiction with Islam and actually refute Islam and show us that Christianity is true. So, if Muslims do agree, indeed, with their own Quran that the Gospel is a scripture by Allah, then they have to affirm that Christianity is true and that Islam is false, which is why they somehow

have to reinterpret what the Quran actually says about these books. But then they have to go to the Quran and pick out passages which contradict them completely. So, it's an argument that is airtight.

FRANK:
And we'll unpack it more right after the break. I actually asked that of a guide I had in Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Dilemma. I'll tell you what he said and then we'll go further with it, how you can use it by just asking a couple of questions of anybody you know who is a Muslim.

And they might not come to the foot of the cross obviously immediately, but it will plant a seed of doubt about the Quran and Islam in their minds. And that's what you can do as you evangelize. All right, back in just a couple minutes. Don't go anywhere.

AD:
Students across America are more open to the truth of Christianity than ever before. And Dr. Frank Turek is taking the powerful evidence for God to campuses like UC Berkeley, the University of Georgia, Ohio State, and Alabama, reaching thousands in person and millions more online.

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FRANK:
Ladies and gentlemen, as you're listening to this, coming up to the end of the year, we do have a $300,000 matching gift. So any money you give will be doubled up to 300,000 because people know that we're going to college campuses here in the spring. We have at least 15 scheduled already.

Our security costs have risen to such an extent that it costs us now $15,000 to go to any of these campuses and present the evidence that Christianity is true and answer questions. And

since we don't charge students a dime, a hundred percent of our ability to do that is funded by you, the donor.

So thank you. Go to crossexamined.org here at the end of the year. Click on donate. You will see the donate button there. A hundred percent of your donations go to ministry, 0% to buildings. We're completely virtual. You don't come to us, we go to you. And as I say, at least 15 campuses are scheduled for the spring.

Some of that, of course, is the Charlie effect. While hearts are tender, we need to get out there and we will do that. We've done it in the fall. We're going to do it in the spring with your help. So thank you for helping us with that $300,000 matching gift. Let me go back to my guest, Apostate Prophet, with us all the way from some underground bunker somewhere in the Central Time Zone.

And we were talking before the break about something called the Islamic Dilemma. In fact, David Wood has a really good video on that. We'll put that in the show notes as well so you can see it in detail. When I used this on a Saudi Arabian guide, I asked him, okay, here's where the Quran says it's in Surah 5, verse 68 or so it says, oh, you people of the book, you have no ground to stand on unless you stand on the law and the Gospels. It's basically saying you gotta to obey the Old Testament and the New Testament.

But then in the previous chapter, Surah 4, chapter 4, it says Jesus never died, so he couldn't have risen from the dead. Yet the Bible says he did die and rise from the dead. So if the Quran is telling us to obey the Bible, they appear to be caught in a dilemma because it says obey the Bible, but it also contradicts what the Bible says.

So if the Bible actually is true, the Quran is false. If the Bible is false, the Quran is still false because it's telling you to obey a false book. So I asked him this AP, and I said, how do you interpret 5 and 6? He said, well, or, chapter 5, verse 68. He said, well we have to obey most of it. That's what he said. Not all of it. Have you--? What kind of responses have you gotten from Muslims on this?

AP:
It is really incredible because, I would also, most definitely. I think David has become the primary-- David Wood has become the primary voice, the primary person, the primary figure who now has a whole project going on about the Islamic Dilemma, and he's doing a fantastic job at presenting it. I have been telling him forever to write a book about it.

And I keep pushing him on that. I think he's going to do that soon. I believe he's working on it actually. The responses that I saw-- So here is how you can basically break it down. So the Islamic Dilemma is that according to the Quran, the Torah and the Gospel were revealed by Allah, that no one can change or corrupt Allah's words.

This is what the Quran says. The Quran also said that Jews and Christians still possess the valid Torah in the Gospel in Muhammad's time. And Muhammad himself was told to consult the people of the book, the Jews and Christians, for confirmation. But the Torah and the Gospel, specifically the Gospel, directly contradict with Quran's core doctrines, such as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the crucifixion, and the Resurrection.

So Muslims are left with two options. One is that the Torah and the Gospel are indeed preserved, in which case Islam is false because those texts directly contradict the Quran. Or number two is the Torah, and the Gospel are not preserved, which would also lead to the conclusion that Islam is false because the Quran repeatedly affirms, and protects, and appeals those supposedly corrupted books.

So, no matter what you pick, Islam is refuted. That is the dilemma. They can't get out of it. And then there are of course the verses that we can cite and we quote. If you want to accept what the Quran actually says and want to say that the Torah and the Gospel have been preserved as the Quran confirms in multiple verses, 547, 566, 568 and so on, 1094, then you have to believe what the Gospels teach.

You have to believe in the divinity, the death, and resurrection of Christ. You have to believe in Christianity. You have to affirm it. The response that you usually get from Muslims is that, well, Christians have misunderstood or misinterpreted the Gospel from their Christian goggles, and

their Christian perspective that falls very flat because the Gospels are very, very explicit and very clear.

And the earliest Christians believed in the core teachings that they teach, which brought us the Christianity that we have. The Gospels directly tell that Jesus rose from the dead, that he is God, and so on.

Other responses that they give are something along the lines of what you just said, or what the person gave you as an answer. We are supposed to believe in the preserved correct parts of it. But when you ask them then what those parts are, they will say, well, those parts that are in line with Islam and do not contradict Islam.

So it's circular reasoning. You're supposed to accept the Quran as authority to judge what is and is not authentic in the Gospels and the Torah. But wait a minute. Once again, we have the dilemma because the Quran does say that those books, as they exist in the time of Muhammad, were preserved.

So when you say that you only believe in parts of it, you are denying what the Quran says. Once again, you fail. There is just no real way out of it. And in all honesty, even if I wanted to give them the benefit of the doubt and give a proper explanation in favor of Islam against the Islamic Dilemma, I probably couldn't come up with one.

We have actually tried it, and we can't really respond to it because, as I said, it's an airtight solid argument that really thoroughly refutes and debunks Islam. And it is currently so strong because we have been repeatedly talking about it. So many more people are talking about it every day. We see Muslims try to respond to it, and we have not seen a single good response from a Muslim.

FRANK:
Wow. I've heard some people try and say that the Quran at the time, or sorry, the Bible at the time of the Quran's writing-- So the 700's AD, it's been corrupted since then. But that's easily refuted by saying, like, we have entire Bibles from the 300's AD. So we know what the Bible said

in Muhammad's day. It's the same thing it says today. It hasn't changed. And I think also your point saying that the Quran says you can't abrogate, you can't change Allah's words.

And if Allah's words are considered the Old and the New Testaments, then the argument from corruption doesn't work either. Then you're again violating the Quran. So this would seem to be a knockdown argument for Islam, but yet people still persist in belief anyway.

AP:
It is a knockdown argument. And it is actually getting to such a level that just recently, just a week ago or a few days ago, the most popular Muslim debater, Muhammad Hijab, actually sat down to angrily respond to it and angrily try to explain it. And I would encourage those who are curious about his response to actually sit down and watch it.

FRANK:
Where would that be? Can we put it in the show notes? We'll find it.

AP:
I'm not sure what it's called, but just recently, Inspiring Philosophy, Mike Jones, he and David together reviewed it and responded to it.

FRANK:
We'll find it. We'll put it in the show notes, friends. Because Mike does a good job at Inspiring Philosophy, and of course so does David too at Apologetics Roadshow YouTube channels. You can check them out as well. And look, we need to reach out to people in the second largest religion in the world.

And only 1% of missionaries go to Muslim countries. I think part of the reason is they're afraid. But we need to reach out to people who are believing in God. They're believing in some kind of cause out there, but they're believing in the wrong God.

And I want to talk a little bit about the historical reliability of the Quran itself if we can, AP. What is the evidence there? Because we've had Jay Smith on. Jay takes a very skeptical view, as you know, of the historical reliability of the Quran.

You take a less skeptical view of that, but there still are problems with it. In fact, if you go to even Chat GPT or any kind of AI and you type in, were there 30 Qurans in 1923 or 1924, not 30 different translations, but 30 different versions, it will affirm, yes there were and the Egyptian government selected one to make it the standard in the school system there.

And then the Saudi government in about 1985 said, yeah, we're going to use that version as the official Quran for all the world. Okay, this is 1300 years after the Quran is supposed to have been written. Why are there so many different versions of the Quran running around?

AP:
So this is the funny thing. This is important specifically because of one issue which Muslims love to bring up, which is the perfect preservation, and the uniqueness of the Quran. So Muslims make the claim that the Quran is the only scripture, the only book that was directly revealed by Allah, word for word dictated, and that has ever since been completely and perfectly preserved.

Now, the historicity of that tells us a different story, right? As you just said, we have different versions of the Quran. Now those versions of the Quran don't have that much of a difference in the core message, but they do have differences in writings, and wordings, and letters, and things like that.

Muslims often try to explain it as simply different dialects, and you know, pronunciations. But that's not entirely true because the different versions actually have, you know, different words used on multiple occasions that actually change the meaning of a passage.

So, the earliest Muslim interpreters did, for example, appeal to the Quran and said, according to this manuscript, it goes like this, and according to that manuscript, it goes like this. Both meanings could possibly be accepted, you know, so that's how they use those different Quran versions. The thing is that it also goes back to how corrupted the supposed revelation of the Quran was in the very beginning.

So those different Quran versions came into existence when the scribes and memorizers of Muhammad came together and began compiling the Quran from their memory, and from their notes, and creating different versions, of which many were actually initially burned.

And it was unified, but it was still not unified. There were still many other versions left. But even going back from that, the first time that the Quran was indeed compiled into one book, into one scripture, was only after the death of Muhammad. There was a major battle during the so-called apostasy wars when many Muslims were leaving Islam after the death of Muhammad, which caused a major war.

That war killed many Muslims who memorized, and who wrote down parts of the Quran which Muhammad revealed from his mouth as supposedly the angel Gabriel spoke it through him directly from Allah. So in order to prevent the complete loss of the Quran by the deaths of the memorizers and scribes, Muhammad's immediate followers came together and decided to compile it all into one book.

And even in those narrations you will find that the person given the task to compile it says, but the Prophet never ever commanded us to do such a thing. So the Prophet never even gave them the idea that it should be compiled into one book. He simply repeated revelations that he supposedly received from an angel.

FRANK:
A lot more with Apostate Prophet. Go to Apostate Prophet on YouTube. Also you can check out his website apostateprophet.com, and he has some amazing videos on his YouTube channel where you can go a lot deeper than what we're talking about here.

You need to be better at reaching out to Muslims friends, and Apostate Prophet can help. So check him out there. I'm Frank Turek. You're listening to I Don't have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Back right after the break.

How did a devout Muslim living in Turkey leave Islam, become an atheist, and then later became a Christian, and now calls himself the Apostate Prophet and is one of the biggest voices on YouTube pointing out the problems with Islam?

If you go to YouTube, look up Apostate Prophet. You'll see my guest there. Ridvan will enlighten you on so many different issues. And he is also good friends with our mutual friend, David Wood, who also does some great work in this area as well.

We haven't gotten into this yet Ridvan, but I do want to ask you a little bit about when you did leave Islam, you became an atheist for a while. In fact, I was looking back at a text that David Wood sent me. This had to be five, six, seven years ago. He said this guy calls himself the Apostate Prophet and he wants to debate you.

You had debated Michael Brown, on does God exist, I guess. And somehow it never went anywhere. I asked David a question and he didn't get back to me. But how did you become an atheist? Why did you become an atheist? And then I don't know if we'll get to it in this show. We'll have you on again and talk about how you became a Christian. Why'd you become an atheist? What made you go, I think this whole thing is bunk. There's no God.

AP:
It's very funny that you bring this up. I completely forgot about that. But I was having a conversation with David, and I did suggest to him that I should debate you. So that did come up. Wow. It's very incredible. I completely forgot about that. But I'm glad that's not the case anymore. I'm a Christian today, thank God.

FRANK:
Amen. That's great.

AP:
So, how did I become an atheist? Well, you know, we talked about Islam. So going back to the beginnings of Islam, I realized that Muhammad was simply making things up and you know, telling people that he's receiving revelations from an angel that nobody ever witnessed, and delivering them to his surroundings, to his people who would then somehow shape and turn it into Quran verses and all that.

So I had to come to the conclusion that Muhammad was just somebody who calls himself a pro, who called himself a prophet, but who actually had mental problems. There are many other narrations that support this, such as, the ones that talk about him. Whenever he would receive a revelation from an angel, he would have what you could describe as seizures.

For example, he would fall on the ground. He would sweat heavily. He would make loud snorting noises and spend some time in that state to then eventually come to himself and say, I just received a revelation from the angel Gabriel. So these are directly in the Muslim sources by the way.

In fact, that's directly how the Sahi Bukhari, the number one most reliable book on the narrations about Muhammad's life starts. It describes how that is how he used to receive his revelations. It sounds a little bit weird, doesn't it?

FRANK:
Didn't he used to think that he was being possessed by demons by Jinn?

AP:
Yeah.

FRANK:
They call them Jinn in Islam?

AP:
That's true. And he actually, it actually led him to want to end his own life. So—

FRANK:
And his wife Kadijah talked him out of it and said, you're getting revelation from the same source as Moses.

AP:
Yes, precisely. That's true.

FRANK:
So he, Muhammad early on thought that his revelations were from the dark side.

AP:
He did indeed.

FRANK:
Then he said, no. His wife said, no, you're getting it from Moses, or from the same source as Moses. And isn't it interesting the world's second largest religion does not have any miraculous confirmation that anyone else could confirm.

AP:
It doesn't.

FRANK:
It's similar to Mormonism. In fact people have made the case that Mormonism is just very much like Islam without the violence because there's just one guy that gets a new revelation, and he can have many wives as well. But he's not as violent, quite obviously.

And he's saying that the Bible is corrupt, and he has the new revelation. It's very similar in that regard. Of course, Islam is much larger than Mormonism. It's been around a lot longer. But how do Muslims respond when you say, well Muhammad really thought he was being possessed by demons?

AP:
They don't really respond. I mean they just explained that this is how he received his revelations, this is what Allah decided. But of course you can't say that this logically disqualifies and refutes him as a prophet.

But you could point out how odd it is that apparently Allah chooses to deliver his revelations to him in that way that he gives him immense pain and suffering as Muhammad himself describes it. That he throws him on the ground, makes people get a little bit scared of him and all that.

And eventually, we learn that this is apparently a revelation from Allah. So finding out these things and then also the miracle about the moon splitting for example, which was touted as this big miracle that everybody witnessed. It turns out that that was probably invented a few centuries after Muhammad's death and nobody ever witnessed it.

Had the moon split in two in Muhammad's lifetime in the 7th century in Arabia, it would have been witnessed by multiple other civilizations that were far advanced and they would have taken note of it. Nobody noticed it. So anyway, these revelations led me to eventually end up leaving Islam, questioning religion in general, thinking that Muhammad was just a self-proclaimed prophet who sold something to the world.

And I did sarcastically come up with the idea of just saying, you know, I can do that too, but I can actually have a good message. So I'll just call myself a prophet as well-- [Laughter] And the Apostate Prophet and then talk about how bad Islam actually is and all that.

During that time I did wrestle a lot with the idea of God. It's fine to say wrestling with God, but at that time my conclusion, without looking too deeply into the Bible, into Judaism and Christianity, aside from figuring out the contradictions between the Bible and the Quran, my conclusion was at that time, I think all of it is a lie.

We were just deceived. We are just being deceived. There is no God. If there was a God, then it would be proven true. But the best explanation that we have is that there is no God. And I go with the best explanation, not with, the more difficult or the least supported explanation and all that.

So these basic new atheist thoughts. Also going with Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris, and all the others, and basically getting my confirmation bias from them, led me to become an atheist. It was an interesting path to go down after freeing myself from the shackles of Islam.

FRANK:
How long was that period, the atheism period?

AP:
It was actually very long. So, it was like almost 10 years long or so. I mean, at the beginning, at the very end or so, I would have described myself more as an agnostic, but I would have simply chosen the title agnostic atheist.

But still it was nearly 10 years. So for nearly 10 years I was an atheist. For the longest time I did sympathize with Christianity and even did say in the past, I wish it was true. So, this is something that I did say many years ago because I always loved it and had respect for it, but I could not believe it.

I thought that God is simply something that people made up to explain the natural world around them and the things that happen in life because they can't deal with the fact that one day everybody dies and it all just stops existing. I thought, the only explanation we have is simply that it is what it is.

There is no inherent meaning. There is no inherent creator. There is no inherent, there is no purpose to anything. We all happen to accidentally live on this planet in this empty universe, and one day we will die and all of this will be gone.

And that's just how it is. And I thought I could make peace with that. Yeah, I thought I could make peace with that and find meaning in that with existentialist philosophy, and absurdist philosophy and all that.

But I really tricked myself because whenever I pondered more deeply about it and whenever I was less motivated, I found how I'm simply providing meaning for myself because I'm so terrified of the fact that there is actually no meaning at all and all is for nothing and there is really no reason why I should be alive. That was my thought, but still I wanted to stick to my atheism until eventually I couldn't do that any longer.

FRANK:
And you began to investigate Christianity at that point?

AP:
Yeah, Yeah, I thought I knew a lot about Christianity. But as I was exploring Christianity, I guess we can go into more detail on that later on. As I was exploring Christianity, I realized that I was actually exploring Judaism at first, then Christianity.

But as I was exploring it, I realized that I don't know anything about it. And I began going into the early theology and the early philosophical explanations of Christianity and found them incredibly profound. And it was when I read the epistle to the Romans that I realized what a fantastic set of writings the New Testament actually is, and how impactful and meaningful it is.

I was always fascinated with Ecclesiastes of the Old Testament. But reading the Gospels and encountering their message for the first time gave me a big fascination with Christianity. At some point I thought that I can simply believe that there is nothing, that there is no God, but I can still just hold that Jesus was a very good moral character, and a great teacher, and a fantastic figure, and everybody should be more like Jesus.

I mean, as an atheist, I did say that I wish everybody was more like Jesus and less like Muhammad. But back then this was just about what kind of a teacher and moral figure Jesus was. And it's funny because later on, as I was exploring Christianity, I read 'Mere Christianity' by C.S. Lewis for the first time.

And that's where I then encounter his whole argument that it's actually foolish to say that he's merely a good moral teacher, but not God. Because if he was indeed a good moral teacher, he wouldn't be making the claims that he made and all that. So I thought, wow, that's pretty incredible. That was kind of like a slap in my face when I'm trying to be nice to Jesus.

FRANK:
When did the message of grace, when did you comprehend that? When did that come through, that you weren't bound to this slavish idea that your good deeds needed to outweigh your bad? When did that happen? We only got about 30 seconds. We'll pick it up in the next show. But when did that happen? How did that come about?

AP:
Quite recently. I only became a Christian very, very recently. In fact, it was only at the beginning of this year that I started calling myself a Christian. It was a very difficult idea to embrace after Islam, which told me basically that I'm an animal that is being brutally trained by Allah, who is constantly breathing down my neck, and waiting to reward me or to punish me, then realizing

what kind of a wonderful, humane message, what kind of a human message, the gospel actually has, came only very, very recently.

FRANK:
Well, we're going to unpack that on the next program with Apostate Prophet, ladies and gentlemen. What an interesting man this gentleman is. And we're going to learn much more from him in the next show. So check it out. Merry Christmas. Happy New Year. Ladies and gentlemen, don't forget about our matching gift. Thank you to Apostate Prophet. Again, apostateprophet.com or the YouTube channel Apostate Prophet. Check it out. We'll see you here next time. God bless.